

# GENDER G ♀ A ♂ P ISSUES

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and what you need to  
know about them

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# **Gender Gap Issues**

and what you need to know about them.

**June 1992**

Women's Caucus, Democratic National Committee  
Mary Botkin, Chair  
3215 SE Stark Street  
Portland, Oregon 97214





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*American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees*  
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*League of Women Voters*  
*National Abortion Rights Action League*  
*National Committee on Pay Equity*  
*National Coalition Against Sexual Assault*  
*National Organization of Women*  
*National Women's Law Center*  
*National Women's Political Caucus*  
*9 to 5, National Association of Working Women*  
*Occupational Health Foundation*  
*The Women's Political Action Group*

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of the  
Democratic National Committee**

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*Dedicated to all the  
Democratic Women and Men  
who seek to make a  
difference in our nation.*

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*In the last presidential election, almost 6 million more women than men cast their ballot. Since 54% of all registered voters are women, a political phenomenon has emerged known as the "Gender Gap". Sixty-eight percent of women eligible to vote are registered while only sixty-five percent of eligible men are registered. The woman's vote is of critical importance to any candidate seeking elected office in today's political climate.*

*The gender gap, rather than a given set of issues, is the way women think and react to those issues. It is the manner in which women prioritize those issues differently than men. For example, as economic changes occur women would prioritize the budget differently than men. As stated in the June 1992 issue of Life magazine, "It's not that men don't care about these issues. It's simply that women care more."*

*We have highlighted some of the issues of specific concern to women in an effort to assist all Democrats in capturing the women's vote. It is our goal to educate candidates on these issues and help them articulate these concerns of women.*

*Women voters need to know that Democratic candidates share their concerns and will support their issues if elected to office.*

## ***Message from the Chair***

While the media refers to 1992 as the Year of the Woman, many women will continue to support the Bush Administration because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of what the last 12 years have done to erode the basic rights of women and men in America.

This document represents an effort to assist Democratic candidates in articulating those issues of special concern to women voters in the general election.

Nothing can properly prepare a candidate for the horror of sexual harassment on the job, an illegal abortion or the harsh reality of poverty or underemployment. We have tried to explain in simple terms the real impact on American society of 12 years of cruelty by an administration that explained away their abandonment of America by saying "the citizens didn't try hard enough."

It is time for the Democrats and especially democratic women leaders to deliver the Democratic message that will bring our women home! The message is clear. "We stand for your issues, the issues of America!"

The issues contained in this document are not just "women's issues." They are the issues of American workers and citizens. When any group is not adequately represented, or any voice not heard, all citizens suffer from the lack of perspective those groups bring forth from their experiences and cultural diversity.

Even though women comprise 51% of America's population, we are woefully under-represented in elected leadership positions. We only hold 5.6% or 30 seats in the U.S. Congress and only 60 state-wide offices including 3 governors. Only 18% of state legislative seats in the entire nation are held by women.

Of the 126 women running for U.S. Congressional seats, 81 are Democrats and 14 of the 18 women seeking U.S. Senate seats are Democrats.

It is not necessary for women to be in the absolute majority to have their voice heard in public policy decision making. We only need to increase our numbers for our message to be loud enough to be heard. As more Democrats and women take office, the message in America will change to one of caring, compassion and equality.

This document is not meant to be bipartisan. It is intended to help Democrats, women and men, get elected. It is designed to assist in developing the message to women and to encourage Republican women to "come home" to the party that speaks to their issues.

Women will cast deciding votes in many elections and it is important that we assist candidates in articulating the issues that will steady the Democratic vote and capture the vote of Republican women.

The Women's Caucus of the Democratic National Committee wants to invite you to use all and any information contained in this document. You, as a Democrat, may copy all or part of any piece, in fact we hope you will. Good Luck!



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# Child Care

In 1970, 70% of U.S. families fit the traditional mold of a father in the work place and a stay-at-home mother. In 1990, 6 out of 10 two-parent households had both parents in the labor force.

**Over 50% of all mothers with pre-school children work outside the home.**

**By 1995, 80% of all school age children will have mothers in the work force.**

**Less than 5% of American employers provide their employees with child care facilities or other options.**

The need for quality, affordable child care has reached critical proportions. The number of child care facilities has not grown fast enough to meet the demand.

**More than half of this nation's school age children are in need of after school supervision.**

**Head Start programs serve only 17% of the "at risk" preschool children they were designed to serve.**

**According to a recent survey, 28% of workers with children, twelve years or younger, had left a job or refused a promotion because of inadequate child care.**

Quality child care is not affordable for many families. The average annual cost for one child is \$3,000.

**The average annual income of a single working mother is \$10,000.**

**For many single mothers, the lack of affordable child care makes the difference between working and welfare.**





**30% of working parents feel the child care they can afford is not high quality.**

There are few government standards set for the child care industry. Many states don't have even minimum standards and the vast majority of home care providers are unlicensed and unregulated.

Parents and children are not the only ones who suffer because of the lack of affordable child care. Employers lose too.

**In a study of 6,000 workers, almost 60% of them felt child care problems affected their productivity.**

**Child care related absenteeism costs U.S. businesses an estimated \$3 billion a year.**

## **What can be done**

- ✓ Development of a comprehensive national policy on child care.
- ✓ Government incentives to businesses that provide child care options.
- ✓ Increased funding for child care programs.

## **Resources**

Child Care Action Campaign  
330 Seventh Avenue, 17th Fl.  
New York, New York 10001

# Family Leave

The United States is the only industrialized country which does not have a national leave policy. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, if all U.S. employees who needed time off to care for children or aging parents were added together, they would constitute a majority of this country's workers.

**80% of all woman in the U.S. labor force are of child bearing years.**

**60% of all children have mothers working outside the home.**

**Almost 1/4 of American workers provide care for an elderly relation.**

Many employers think family leave is expensive and unnecessary, but American companies lose over \$700 million a year because of inadequate leave policies.

**The cost of replacing an employee is significantly higher than granting leave.**

**Family leave decreases employee turnover, saving employers the cost of re-hiring and training.**

Workers should not have to choose between their jobs and their family responsibilities.

**A significant number of working parents have considered leaving their jobs because of family responsibilities.**

**83% of all women will be caregivers to children in their lifetime and 37% will care for an elderly relation.**

**Over 25% of people caring for aging parents have quit their full-time jobs or taken part-time jobs in order to provide the needed care.**

## **What can be Done**

- ✓ Passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- ✓ Government incentives for small business to encourage leave policies.

## **Resources**

Business and Professional Women  
2012 Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Families and Work Institute  
330 Seventh Avenue  
New York, New York 10001



# Health Care

The United States has the costliest health care system in the world. In 1990, approximately \$2,600 was spent for every man, woman and child in this country. Yet, we have one of the lowest life expectancies and almost the highest infant mortality rate in the industrialized world.

**The United States and South Africa are the only two industrialized nations without a national health plan.**

**Since 1985, the cost of health care has risen by 40%.**

**Every year, nearly 40,000 children die before their first birthday and more than 1/3 of pregnant women receive little or no prenatal care.**

In this country, most health insurance is provided as a benefit of full-time employment. Because many women work part-time, they and their children are more likely to be without health care.

**A estimated 37 million people have no insurance of any kind.**

**53 million people have limited coverage, with deductibles and co-payments so high that health care is too expensive for them.**

**81 million Americans under 65 are denied or given limited coverage because of pre-existing medical problems.**

**Less than half of American companies provide total coverage for their employees.**

Access to quality health care is an issue that affects all people, but women often find it harder to find comprehensive health coverage.

**Women use the health care system almost 30% more than men.**

The American Cancer Society estimates that 1 in 9 women in the U.S. will get breast cancer. The cost of mammograms are inadequately covered by most insurance plans.

More than half of this country's part-time workers are women and employer paid health benefits rarely cover these workers.

## **What can be done**

- ✓ Passage of a comprehensive health care plan that guarantees coverage for all Americans.

## **Resources**

Center for Health Ethics and Policy  
University of Colorado  
Post Office Box 133



# Pay Equity

Pay Equity is not just equal pay for equal work. It is equal pay for work of comparable value. It eliminates discrimination between job categories that are different yet require similar levels of skill, responsibility or working conditions.

Even with the passage of the Equal Pay Act in 1963, employers continue to under value and under pay women.

**Women working full-time still earn on average only 71% of what men earn. The wage gap is even greater when race is considered in addition to gender.**

**The fact that the wage gap has closed some what over the last decade is largely due to the loss of higher paying male-dominated jobs in manufacturing.**

**Only 10% of women workers earn more that \$12.65 per hour.**

Some people say these differences are caused by education, experience and time in the labor force. But, when jobs are analyzed, a significant portion of the differences cannot be explained by any of these factors.

Therefore, enforcement of the Equal Pay Act of 1963 will not alone bring work place equity.

**National statistics show that most women work in female dominated jobs such as clerical and service occupations.**

**2/3 of this country's minimum wage workers are women.**

**A man with a high school diploma earns more on the average than a college educated woman.**



Employers claim pay equity costs too much and would cause lay-offs and even bankruptcy. This isn't true. Employers have experienced less than a 2-4% increase in their payroll budget as a result of implementing pay equity studies.

## **What can be done**

- ✓ Pass state and local laws requiring enforcement of the Equal Pay Act.
- ✓ Encourage employers to conduct and implement pay equity plans.

## **Resources**

National Committee on Pay Equity  
1126 16th Street, NW Suite 411  
Washington, D.C. 20036

# Right to Choose

Since the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Roe v. Wade, women have been guaranteed the choice of an abortion during the first trimester.

The issue of abortion is complex and emotionally charged and a woman's right to choose has been part of a continuing debate for the last two decades.

**2/3 of Americans favor keeping abortion legal.**

**56% of women and 52% of men oppose any laws making it more difficult for a women to get an abortion.**

**Every year, 200,000 women in this world die as a result of illegal abortions.**

The 1989 U.S. Supreme Court case Webster v. Reproductive Health Services upheld a state's right to restrict access to abortions.

**Last year, 14 states introduced legislation making abortion a criminal offense.**

**33 states have passed legislation requiring some form of parental notification, (requiring minors to tell or get parent's permission before obtaining an abortion).**

The 1991 U.S. Supreme Court case Rust v. Sullivan (known as the "gag rule") upheld a federal regulation forbidding health care providers, who receive federal funding, from providing information about abortion to their patients.

**Twenty states have statutes in conflict with this "gag rule".**

The 1992 U.S. Supreme Court case Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania v. Casey allows restrictions on abortions unless they impose an "undue burden" on a woman's right to choose. An undue burden is one that "has the purpose or effect of placing a substantial obstacle in the path of a woman seeking an abortion of a non-viable fetus."

## What can be done

- ✓ Passage of the Freedom of Choice Act.
- ✓ Repeal the “gag rule” on federally funded health care providers.

## Resources

National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL)  
1101 14th Street, NW 5th Fl.  
Washington, D.C. 20005



# Sexual Harassment

According to the guidelines of the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), sexual harassment is defined as "unwelcome sexual advances, request for sexual favors and verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when... such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment; or ... such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment."

**Between half to three-quarters of women in the United States will experience some form of sexual harassment during their lifetime.**

**The vast majority of women who experience sexual harassment believe they will be penalized if they file a complaint.**

Sexual harassment is not acceptable behavior in the workplace. In fact, it is against the law.

**The EEOC defines sexual harassment as a form of discrimination under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.**

**The Civil Rights Act of 1991 allows workers who have been sexually harassed to sue their employers for punitive damages. There is, however, a cap on damages which can be awarded to victims of sex discrimination.**

Sexual harassment hurts business as well as its victims. American companies pay millions of dollars annually in legal fees, absenteeism and other related costs.

## What can be done

- ✓ Passage of the Equal Remedies Act, which would remove the cap on damages for victims of sexual harassment and other forms of sexual discrimination.

- ✓ Encourage businesses to institute sexual harassment prevention programs.
- ✓ Increase funding for the EEOC for enforcement.

## **Resources**

9 to 5, National Association of Working Women  
614 Superior Avenue, NW  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113

American Federation of State, County & Municipal Workers  
1625 L Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20036



# Violence Against Women

In the last twenty years, assault and other violent crimes against women have increased. From domestic violence to rape, women in this country are at risk.

Domestic violence is part of this continuing violence against women. It knows no racial, religious or socio-economic boundaries. Much of this violence remains hidden and unreported. It remains the single largest cause of injury to women.

**Every 15 seconds a woman is beaten by her male partner.**

**20% of all female patients in U.S. emergency rooms are battered women.**

The American justice system has not done its best to stop this rising violence. Laws are vague and enforcement is lax. Police often cannot or will not arrest the batterers and restraining orders are not stringently enforced.

**One-quarter of abused women are pregnant.**

**Over half of the batterers abuse their children as well as their partner.**

There are more rapes in the United States than any other Western nation. Rape is no longer defined as sexual assault by a stranger. It is believed that only about 10% of the rapes that occur are reported.

**According to the FBI, a woman is raped every 6 minutes in this country.**

**In 85% of rape cases, the victim knows her attacker.**

**The vast majority of rapes are pre-meditated.**





## **What can be done**

- ✓ Re-authorize the family violence and child abuse prevention program.
- ✓ Passage of the Violence against Women Act.
- ✓ Funding for rape crisis centers.
- ✓ More shelters and services for battered women.

## **Resources**

Family Violence Prevention Fund  
Bldg. 1, Suite 200  
1001 Potrero Avenue  
San Francisco, CA 974110

National Coalition Against Sexual Assault  
Box 21378  
Washington D.C. 20009

# Sources

This project was compiled from various sources including:

Fact sheets and position papers from Center for the American Woman & Politics, National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL), International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers (IUE), and the YWCA.

Bargaining for Pay Equity, National Committee on Pay Equity

Building Blocks, A manual for child care, American Federation of State, County & Municipal Employees (AFSCME)

Fact Sheet on Woman's Political Progress, National Women's Political Caucus

Health Security, We gotta have it, AFSCME

1992 Women's Voting Guide, The Women's Political Action Group

Party Lines, Democratic National Committee

Stopping Sexual Harassment, AFSCME

Update on Woman Issues, Congressional Caucus for Women's Issues

Winning with Women, a survey by Emily's List, NWPC & the Women's Campaign Fund

Who Decides, A Reproductive Rights Issues Manual, NARAL

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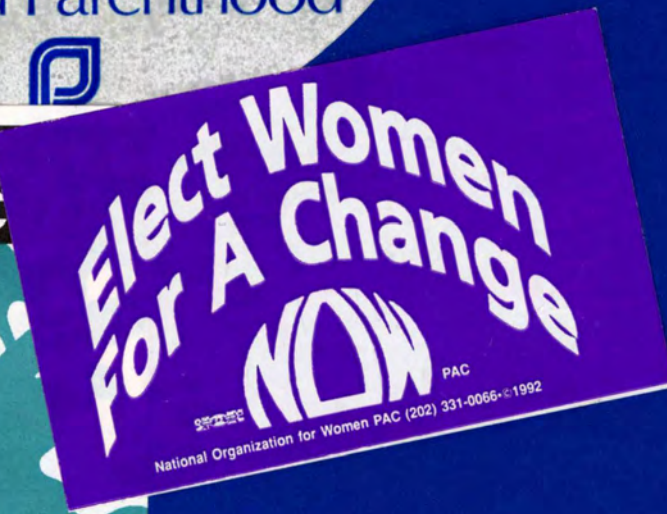
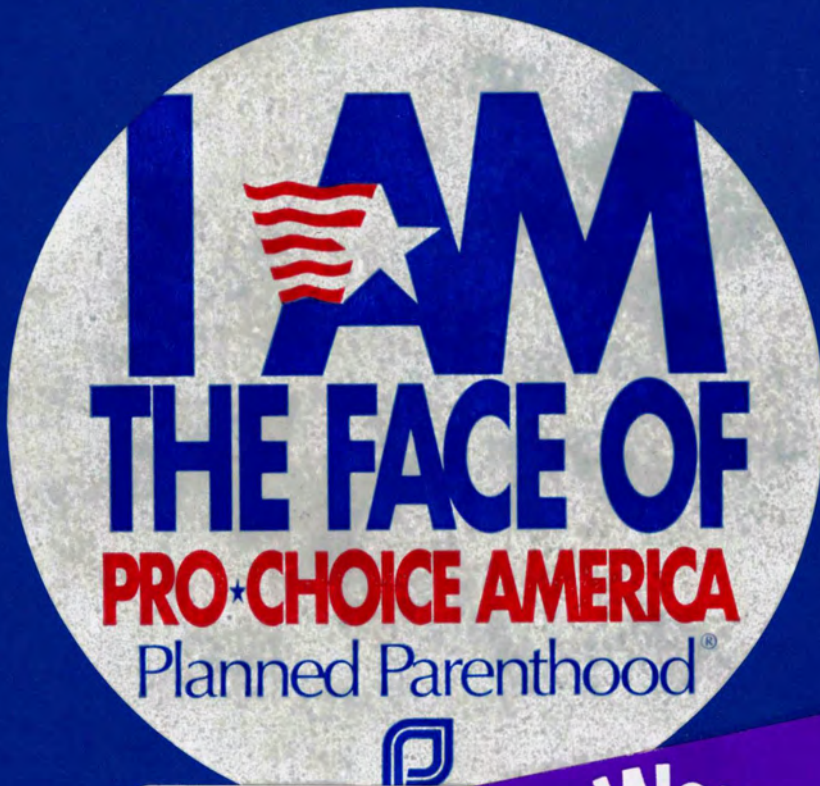
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